

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 20454 01 OF 02 251646Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 L-03 NSCE-00 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 INRE-00 PA-01 SCS-06 CA-01 H-01
HA-05 SP-02 EB-08 SMS-01 /066 W
-----109469 251656Z /47

O 251640Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6054
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
USICA WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 20454

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CSCE, SOPN, UR
SUBJECT: EMBASSY REPRESENTATION ON INCIDENT
INVOLVING NBC NEWSMAN
REF: MOSCOW 20190

1. PRESS COUNSELOR CALLED ON DEPUTY CHIEF OF
MFA PRESS DIVISION LEV KRYLOV AT 12:30 LOCAL
TIME AUGUST 25 TO MAKE ORAL PROTEST OVER
INCIDENT IN WHICH NBC MOSCOW BUREAU CHIEF
EUGENE PELL WAS PREVENTED FROM FILMING NEWS
EVENT OUTSIDE LEFORTOVO PRISON (REPORTED
REFTEL).

2. PRESS COUNSELOR EXPRESSED TO KRYLOV
EMBASSY'S CONCERN OVER THIS INSTANCE OF PER-
EMPTORY INTERFERENCE BY SOVIETS OF "NORMAL
JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITY." NOTING THAT ON PRE-
VIOUS OCCASIONS PELL HAD FILMED DEPARTURES BY
BUSINESSMAN CRAWFORD FROM PRISON WITHOUT
HINDRANCE, AND THAT PRETEXT USED BY SECURITY
OFFICIALS TO PREVENT HIS FILMING THIS TIME
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 20454 01 OF 02 251646Z

(NEIGHBORS WERE SAID TO BE DISTURBED) WERE
HARDLY CREDIBLE, PRESS COUNSELOR LABELED
INCIDENT AS CLEAR VIOLATION OF PRINCIPLES
GOVERNING JOURNALISTIC FUNCTIONS UNDER
HELSINKI CONVENTION. NOTING THAT THIS CASE
WAS NOT ISOLATED EVENT BUT ONE OF SERIES OF
INTIMIDATIONS AND HARRASSMENTS AGAINST

AMERICAN JOURNALISTS, HE PROTESTED PELL CASE AND REQUESTED MINISTRY TO UNDERTAKE STEPS TO PREVENT REPETITION OF SUCH BEHAVIOR.

3. PREFACING HIS REMARKS BY STATING THAT IN GENERAL PELL'S ACTIVITY WAS NOT CONDUCTIVE TO STRENGTHENING AMERICAN-SOVIET RELATIONS, KRYLOV REJECTED PROTEST, ADDING THAT IT WAS SOVIET SIDE, NOT AMERICAN WHICH SHOULD BE LAUNCHING COMPLAINT. HE STATED THAT FILMING OF PRISONS WAS AMONG THOSE THINGS PROSCRIBED BY SOVIET LAW AS EMBASSY ITSELF KNEW SINCE IT MAINTAINED LISTS OF SUCH THINGS FOR AMERICAN VISITORS. PELL SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT PHOTOGRAPHING LEFORTOVO WITHOUT PERMISSION WAS PROHIBITED, NOTING PARENTHETICALLY THAT IN ANY COUNTRY, BE IT THE UNITED STATES OR FRANCE, PEOPLE WOULD BE BOUND TO QUESTION MOTIVES OF ANYONE IN PROCESS OF PHOTOGRAPHING PRISON.

4. PRESS COUNSELOR RESPONDED THAT IT WAS MFA'S RESPONSIBILITY TO INFORM JOURNALISTS ACCREDITED TO IT WHAT WAS PERMISSIBLE AND WHAT WAS NOT. EMBASSY DID NOT INTEND TO BEGIN BRIEFING JOURNALISTS ON MFA'S BEHALF. WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR PELL HAD NOT BEEN BRIEFED BY SOVIET OFFICIALS, PRESS COUNSELOR EXPLAINED THAT SINCE PELL HAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 20454 01 OF 02 251646Z

FILMED AT LEFORTOVO TWICE BEFORE WITHOUT HINDRANCE, HE HAD NO REASON TO ASSUME THAT THIS OCCASION WAS SOMEHOW DIFFERENT AND THAT HE WAS VIOLATING SOVIET REGULATIONS. KRYLOV INSISTED THAT FACT THAT PELL HAD NOT BEEN STOPPED ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS IN NO WAY EXONERATED HIS ACTIVITY IN THIS INSTANCE. MOREOVER, AMERICAN CONSULAR OFFICER PRINGLE, WHO HAD WITNESSED PART OF SCENE, SHOULD HAVE EXPLAINED TO PELL THAT HE WAS IN WRONG. DISAGREEING, PRESS COUNSELOR RETURNED TO HIS INITIAL POINT, THAT KEEPING JOURNALISTS INFORMED OF WHAT THEY CAN AND CANNOT DO WAS CLEARLY MFA'S RESPONSIBILITY, IN WHICH IT HAD FAILED IN THIS CASE.

5. KRYLOV THEN INTRODUCED NEW TOPIC OBSERVING THAT PELL WAS IN THE WRONG ALSO IN PERMITTING HIS CAMERAMAN, WHO WAS IN SOVIET UNION ON TOURIST VISA, TO PURSUE JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITY, A SITUATION PATENTLY COUNTER TO SOVIET LAW. SECOND SECRETARY, PRESS DIVISION, ALEKSANDR VOZNIKOV, ALSO PRESENT AT MEETING, COMMENTED

THAT SINCE MFA PERFECTLY WILLING TO PROCESS
JOURNALIST VISAS FOR FOREIGN CAMERAMEN, PELL
BEHAVIOR IN THIS CASE WAS PARTICULARLY
UNJUSTIFIED. ACCORDING TO VOZNIKOV, PELL HAD
ONLY ATTEMPTED TO RECTIFY CAMERAMAN'S
IRREGULAR STATUS ONE WEEK AGO. PRESS COUNSELOR
ADMITTED HE HAD NOT BEEN AWARE OF VISA PROBLEM
AND SAID THAT HE WOULD CALL IT TO PELL'S
ATTENTION.

5. RETURNING TO KRYLOV'S OPENING REMARK REGARD-

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 20454 02 OF 02 251648Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 L-03 NSCE-00 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 INRE-00 PA-01 SCS-06 CA-01 H-01
HA-05 SP-02 EB-08 SMS-01 /066 W
-----109485 251655Z /47

O 251640Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6055
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
USICA WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 20454

ING PELL'S ACTIVITY IN CONTEXT OF AMERICAN-SOVIET
RELATIONS, PRESS COUNSELOR STATED THAT SOVIET AND
U.S. VIEWS DIFFERED PROFOUNDLY ON HOW JOURNAL-
ISTS' ACTIVITIES COULD BE HELPFUL TO RELATIONS.
HE EXPRESSED OPINION THAT IN COVERING CRAWFORD
STORY PELL HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN LEGITIMATE
JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITY PROMPTED BY "NORMAL,
NATURAL, AND NECESSARY INTEREST" ON PART OF
AMERICAN TELEVISION VIEWERS IN EVENT IMPORTANT
TO US-USSR RELATIONS. REFUSING TO COMMENT ON
SIGNIFICANCE OR LEGITIMACY OF CRAWFORD STORY,
KRYLOV ASSURED PRESS COUNSELOR THAT WHILE
SOVIETS DID NOT INTEND TO ERECT "ARTIFICIAL
OBSTACLES" TO HINDER AMERICAN JOURNALISTS
IN COVERING NEWS, VIOLATIONS OF SOVIET LAW
WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED.

6. FYI. MEETING, WHICH LASTED APPROXIMATELY
45 MINUTES, WAS LOW-KEY AND RELAXED WITH
PARTICIPANTS ACKNOWLEDGING DIFFERENCES AND
WILLING TO CONCEDE DEGREE OF VALIDITY TO EACH
OTHER'S VIEWS. TOON
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 20454 02 OF 02 251648Z

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FILMS, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, JOURNALISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW20454
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780348-0974
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780823/aaaaatih.tel
Line Count: 181
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 605a755b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MOSCOW 20190
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1621415
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EMBASSY REPRESENTATION ON INCIDENT INVOLVING NBC NEWSMAN
TAGS: SOPN, UR, US, CSCE, (PELL, EUGENE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/605a755b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014